

# Regional AGENDA

## METROPOLITAN KING COUNTY COUNCIL

May 1999

### Council expands transit choices for riders with disabilities while controlling future costs

For thousands of disabled people in the area, King County Metro is their "access" to the greater community.

Using specialized vans, Metro provides transit services for county residents with a variety of disabilities. Known as Access, the service is heavily used for transportation to jobs and medical appointments.

So when the county council was faced with skyrocketing costs in this program, councilmembers wanted to ensure that steps to control costs would not come at the expense of accessibility.

Metro's Access service, developed prior to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), served a wide variety of county residents. In addition to providing transit service for disabled persons, Access also provided door-to-door

service to low-income, elderly residents.

"This is a critical service for many of our residents, but it is an expensive one," said Councilmember Maggi Fimia, chair of the Regional Transit Committee. "We wanted to go beyond the basic service outlined under federal law, but we also wanted to stay within our budget."



Maggi Fimia

Working in partnership with customers of Access, recommendations were

made to modify King County's Paratransit Program to ensure the county complies

with the ADA, offers

supplemental service to individuals with special transportation needs, and contains program costs. In March, the council unanimously approved these recommendations.



"We had a looming financial crisis," said Councilmember Rob McKenna, chair of the council's Transportation Committee. "But with the help and hard work of our partners on the Regional Transit Committee, we were able to save money and save the program."

The council was extremely concerned about the escalating costs of the program. Projections showed that services costing the county \$10 million in 1995 would climb to \$50 million by 2005. Bus service would have to be cut for all transit users, if the paratransit costs were not brought under control.

Over the past three years, the Special Transportation Service Task Force, a group of King County residents, developed solutions to the problem. The task force worked under the guidance of the Regional Transit Committee, which consists of county



Rob McKenna

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District 2 Cynthia Sullivan 296-1002  
District 3 Louise Miller 296-1003  
District 4 Larry Phillips 296-1004  
District 5 Dwight Pelz 296-1005

District 6 Rob McKenna 296-1006  
District 7 Pete von Reichbauer 296-1007  
District 8 Greg Nickels 296-1008  
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## King County Arts Commission reaches out to all residents

Established in 1967, the King County Arts Commission (KCAC) celebrates over 30 years of promoting excellence and vitality in the arts. As the nation's first county arts commission, KCAC has been instrumental in providing increased



**Councilmember Larry Phillips led the council in recognizing outgoing Cultural Resources Division Manager, Leonard Garfield, for six years of outstanding leadership.**

public access to arts activities throughout the 2,200 square miles of King County. A volunteer citizen commission works closely with a professional staff to administer funding programs, set policy, and guide initiatives to advance regional cultural opportunities.

The commission's programs leave a lasting legacy through:

- capital funding in the Cultural Facilities Program;
- enhanced learning opportunities for our children through the Cultural Education Program;
- supporting innovation in the arts

## County grants provide big boost for arts organizations

For more than 30 years, the county has promoted the arts through the Public Art Program, the Landmarks and Heritage Program, the Cultural Education Program and the Performance Network.

In addition to providing grants to arts organizations with national and international reputations, such as the Seattle Symphony, Pacific Northwest Ballet and the Bellevue Art Museum, the council approves funding for many smaller, community-based organizations. "Just because people don't live in the big city doesn't mean they don't enjoy the arts," said Councilmember Brian Derdowski. "One of the best aspects of the county's cultural programs is that they deliver no matter where you live."

The Performance Network is a highly praised, unique collaboration between local and regional governments to expand opportunities for regional artists by performing for local audiences. It takes nationally known performers on the road to cities like Carnation, Enumclaw and Tukwila.

Not only does grant funding bring art and cultural projects to communities throughout King County, but county grants are also seed money for great ideas. These grants often provide the leverage

and credibility small, local organizations need to attract additional foundation and corporate grants.

"Six thousand dollars may not sound like a lot, but for a volunteer-run organization in a donated facility, it can be a lot of money," said Councilmember Jane Hague. "Nonprofit groups use these funds to attract artists, subscribers and private donations."

The county is helping fund the renovation of the former Church of Christ Scientist on First Hill. When completed, the remodeled building will serve as a town hall and performance center for inner-city Seattle. "This project combines the art, culture, and history of the area," said Councilmember Larry Gossett, who represents the area. "It can be a great focal point for the past and the future of our community."



**Larry Gossett**

Councilmembers are happy to support programs that work so hard to provide cultural arts and heritage to both incorporated and unincorporated areas of the county. The individual projects reflect the wide array of artistic diversity and heritage interests in King County.

through the Special Projects Program; and,

- providing Sustained Support to organizations in all artistic disciplines.

In the years to come, the Arts Commission will continue to

advocate for the arts in our civic life and explore new partnerships in an effort to be as creative as the community it proudly serves. KCAC applauds the many contributions the arts have made to our region, and thanks the citizens of King County for their continued interest in and support of the arts.

# King County continues long history of support for the arts

**C**elebrate the arts was the theme for National County Government Week (April 19 through 23). In keeping with the theme, the Metropolitan King County Council highlighted the wide array of public arts and cultural heritage programs sponsored by King County.

Over the last six years, the county has awarded approximately \$15 million to more than 150 organizations through its arts and heritage grants programs. So far this year, the council has approved more than \$2.63 million to 76 different cultural organizations

“King County leads the way in so many areas when it comes to public funding for the arts,” said Council Chair Louise Miller, a former music teacher. “We have the nation’s oldest county arts commission. We rank first in the nation for live

theater attendance. And, we financially support a network of organizations that truly bring arts to all corners of the county.”

Every year, the King County Arts Commission and the King County Landmarks and Heritage Commission, in conjunction with the county executive and the county council co-sponsor grants through the Community Arts Initiative and the Cultural Facilities Program. Both are funded from hotel/motel tax revenues, funds which also support the Kingdome, as well as grants for the Special Projects Program and the Cultural Education Program to be awarded later this year.

Applications are evaluated for project feasibility, target audience, variety of artistic discipline and geographic diversity. This year, 28 percent of the facilities grants will go to organizations participating in the program for the first time.

The county is also continuing its support to the Seattle Symphony, the Seattle Opera Association, Seattle Rep and other local arts organizations with national and international reputations. Plus, dozens of smaller, community based arts and heritage groups will receive grants in 1999.



STEVEN LOWE PHOTO

Councilmember Louise Miller presents Deborah Card, executive director of the Seattle Symphony Orchestra, and Richard Pressley, Seattle Symphony member, with a grant from King County.

## King County Landmarks and Heritage Program preserves the past

The King County Landmarks and Heritage Program was established in 1978 to ensure that as the county grows and changes, historic resources and traditions which best reflect the region’s 11,000 years of human history are preserved for future generations.

The members of the King County Landmarks and Heritage Commission are volunteers appointed by the county executive for their expertise in fields such as heritage, architecture, historic preservation, archaeology and education. Commissioners work with the program’s professional staff to promote heritage activities and protect historically significant sites. As the program has developed over the last 20 years, the focus has broadened to include activities such as bringing heritage education into the classroom, identifying and protecting scenic and recreational highway corridors, and promoting economic development through restoration of historic main streets in the county’s rural and suburban areas.

The Landmarks and Heritage Commission works in partnership with the owners of historic buildings, community heritage organizations, and other public agencies. The commission and staff provide support for heritage activities which ranges from training and technical assistance to funding from several grant programs.



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## What we're doing . . .



Councilmember Cynthia Sullivan with Fergie, one of the many animals featured at King County's annual Pet Adopt-a-thon.



Councilmembers Dwight Pelz (left) and Pete von Reichbauer (center left) welcomed a visiting delegation from sister-county Kaohsiung, Taiwan, including Hsi-Wen Huang (center right), vice chairman. Mei-Jui Lin (right) acted as interpreter.

In honor of the Park Lake Homes Cambodian Elders' Council receipt of HUD's Second Annual Public and Indian Housing Crime Prevention Award, Councilmember Greg Nickels (back, second from right)



recognized the Elders' Council outstanding community outreach program. Joined by Councilmember Nickels are Capt. Annette Louie (front right), from the King County Sheriff's office, Lee Lim (back left),

Asian community liaison, Officer Lee Adams (back right), King County Park Lake Police Substation and Steven Norman (back center), executive director, King County Housing Authority.

## Disabled transit options...

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councilmembers and elected officials from local cities.

The key proposal was to tighten up the eligibility requirements for the program, while at the same time partnering with community agencies to provide transportation alternatives for those who no longer qualified for the county's door-to-door transit services. Within five years, more than \$8 million could be saved annually through such partnerships and by re-evaluating paratransit eligibility.

"We wanted to make sure we targeted the services to the people who most need it," said Fimia. "We will be working with cities, local agencies, and senior centers through a new Community Partnership Services to serve those who no longer qualify for paratransit services, but still need assistance."

The changes will go into effect gradually. It is estimated that less than 15 percent of current paratransit riders will be switched over to regular Metro service or other alternatives.